

Message Text

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COMUSJAPAN FUCHU
CG 5TH AF FUCHU
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COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MARR JA
SUBJ: POLITICAL ASSESSMENT OF ANTI-WAR DAY,
OCTOBER 21, 1973

SUMMARY: ANTI-WAR DAY DEMONSTRATIONS WERE LACKLUSTER AFFAIRS THIS YEAR PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF LACK OF BIGGEST DRAWING CARD, US INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM WAR. THIS YEAR'S TURNOUT WAS LESS THAN ONE-HALF OF LAST YEAR'S. ANTI-WAR GROUPS MAY NOW SHIFT TO LOCALIZED, PALPABLE ISSUES, SUCH AS NOISE AND DANGER OF ACCIDENTS ACCOMPANYING TRAINING ACTIVITY. END SUMMARY.

1. DEMONSTRATIONS ON OCTOBER 21 INTERNATIONAL ANTI-WAR DAY WERE GENERALLY ORDERLY AND LACKLUSTER AFFAIRS. ALTHOUGH SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING JSP, JCP, KOMEITO, AND SOHYO, ISSUED CALL FOR 1,300,000 PARTICIPANTS FOR RALLIES AT 214 LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY, ONLY 97,000 SHOWED UP,

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LESS THAN ONE-HALF OF LAST YEAR'S TURNOUT (220,000). BIGGEST

EVENT WAS RALLY SPONSORED BY 18 ORGANIZATIONS ON RIVERBED NEAR YOKOTA. PARTLY BECAUSE OF BAD WEATHER AND INCONVENIENT LOCATION, IT DREW ONLY 19,000, VERSUS 31,000 AT YOYOGI PARK LAST YEAR. RALLIES WITH 2,500 TO 3,000 PARTICIPANTS ALSO HELD AT MISAWA, YOKOSUKA, AND OKINAWA.

2. MAIN REASON FOR POOR TURNOUT AND LACK OF SPIRIT THIS YEAR WAS END OF US INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM WAR. IT IS NOTE-WORTHY THAT BEHEIREN (VIETNAM PEACE LEAGUE), PRINCIPAL SPONSOR OF ANTI-WAR DAY ACTIVITIES IN PAST YEARS, WAS NOWHERE TO BE SEEN THIS YEAR; IT HAD ANNOUNCED IN EARLY OCTOBER THAT IT WOULD DISBAND LATER THIS YEAR. WITHOUT VIETNAM WAR DRAWING CARD, ANTI-WAR GROUPS HAD TO FALL BACK ON PERENNIAL SLOGANS AGAINST SECURITY TREATY AND CALLS FOR REMOVAL OF BASES, OR SUBSIDIARY THEMES, SUCH AS OPPOSITION TO MIDWAY HOMEPORING AND CONCENTRATION OF USAF FACILITIES AT YOKOTA. AS RESULT OF NAGANUMA COURT DECISION, ANTI-SDF THEMES WERE FAR MORE PROMINENT THIS YEAR THAN IN PREVIOUS YEARS. RALLY SPEAKERS MADE VIRTUALLY NO MENTION OF MIDDLE EAST WAR.

3. OUTLOOK: GIVEN PRESENT TRENDS, THIS MAY WELL TURN OUT TO BE ONE OF LAST ANTI-WAR DAYS TO BE OBSERVED IN JAPAN. IN THEIR CONTINUING CAMPAIGN AGAINST US BASES, OPPOSITION GROUPS MAY FOCUS ON PALPABLE ISSUES SURE TO HAVE LOCAL SUPPORT. WITH EMPHASIS ON TRAINING ACTIVITY OF US FORCES RETURNING TO PEACETIME POSTURE, OPPOSITION GROUPS MAY DIRECT MAJOR PART OF THEIR CAMPAIGN AGAINST TRAINING PROGRAMS, STRESSING INHERENT DANGERS OF ACCIDENTS, NOISE, AIR AND LAND TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND OTHER IRRITANTS. AS ALREADY SEEN IN THIS YEAR'S EVENT, SPONSORS MAY SHIFT FOCUS OF DEMONSTRATIONS FROM CENTER-OF-TOWN SITES TO US BASES WITH LOCAL PROBLEMS. THE FEW REMAINING TRAINING FACILITIES, SUCH AS MISAWA, RIPSAW RANGE, CAMP FJUI, NAHA AIRBASE, AND IE SHIMA, MAY BE PRIME AREAS FOR STEPPED-UP DEMONSTRATIONS.

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